

*Measure Would Enable States to Withhold Monetary Support of Genocide-Torn Region*

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**Washington, DC** – What began this February as an Illinois state sanctions law opposed by a district Federal court, today comes full circle in the U.S. House of Representatives. The Sudan Accountability and Divestment Act of 2007 would authorize state and local governments to divest assets in companies that conduct business operations in Sudan, in order to prohibit United States Government contracts with such companies.

U.S. Representative Luis V. Gutierrez (D-Ill.), chairman of the Subcommittee on Domestic and International Monetary Policy, Trade and Technology, began hearings on the Divestment Act (H.R. 180) in March. The Senate version of the Act (S. 2271) returns to the House today for final passage.

"With violence and atrocities in Darfur continuing, it is important that we explore all of the available options we have at our disposal to put a stop to the barbaric slaughter of innocent men, women and children," Gutierrez said. "Divestment is one small measure we can take to send a clear message: the United States will not tolerate the atrocities ongoing in Darfur; we will not support it morally, and we will not support it monetarily."

There is no way to know for certain how many people have lost their lives as a result of the ongoing Genocide in the Darfur region in Western Sudan, but recent estimates are as high as 450,000 dead since the conflict erupted in 2003. In addition to the staggering death toll, another two million Darfuris have been displaced, with nearly a quarter million having been forced into neighboring Chad.

"Divestment is not a cure for genocide, but it can be an important tactic in an overall strategy if used properly. The United States has a responsibility to the international community to tackle this issue head-on with the will to resolve it; this measure represents one step towards that goal."

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